described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor, at the time the invention was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. In particular, the term "weldment" has been objected to as not being sufficiently described. The rejection is respectfully traversed. As acknowledged by the Examiner, the term "weldment" appears in the specification at page 7, line 22. The term is used to describe the "crawler frame 82" of the embodiment shown in FIGS. 3-5. In the context of the specification and the drawings, it is clear that the term "weldment" refers to a unitary structure comprising a plurality of metal pieces that have been welded together. Likewise, Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary, published in 1984 by the Riverside Publishing Company, defines the term "weldment" as a "unit having an assemblage of pieces welded together". More importantly, the term "weldment" is well known by those skilled in the applicable art. In particular, those skilled in the art of large machinery design and manufacture would understand that the term "weldment" is generally used to describe a unitary structure comprising a plurality of metal pieces that have been welded together. Accordingly, the term "weldment" is adequately supported by the specification and a proper element of the claims.

In the outstanding Office Action, the claims have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 b) or (e) as being anticipated by either U.S. Patent No. 6,158,535 to Porubcansky et al. ("Porubcansky") or U.S. Patent No. 5,832,279 to Petzold ("Petzold"). The rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 is respectfully traversed.

The present invention is directed to crawler vehicles, such as crawler cranes, that have a plurality of crawler assemblies that are identical and/or interchangeable. In particular, independent claim 1 and the claims dependent thereon (i.e., claims 2-5 and 9) are each directed to crawler vehicle comprising a car body and a plurality of identical crawler assemblies, wherein each of said crawler assembly comprising a crawler track powered by a drive assembly and supported on a crawler frame. Independent claim 10 and the claims dependent thereon (i.e., claims 11-13) are each directed to a crawler crane having an upper works rotatably mounted on a lower works, wherein the lower works comprises a car body and a pair of interchangeable crawler assemblies. Independent claim 18 and the claims dependent thereon (i.e., claims 19-22 and 26) are each directed to a crawler vehicle comprising first and second crawler assemblies

removably mounted to the first and second sides, respectively, of the car body, wherein each of the crawler assemblies are configured to also be mountable on the other (or either) side of the car body. Independent claim 27 and the claims dependent thereon (i.e., claims 28-29) are each directed to a crawler crane having a lower works comprising two independently powered crawler assemblies mounted on a car body, wherein each of the crawler assemblies are of identical design.

The above-described features have several advantages over the prior art. For example, and as set forth in detail in the originally filed specification, the use of identical and/or interchangeable crawler assemblies permits either crawler assembly to be connected to either side of the vehicle or crane. This eliminates the need to design and manufacture separate right-handed and left-handed crawler assemblies, thereby simplifying and reducing the cost of manufacture. This also eliminates the number of replacement parts that need to be maintained in stock. In other words, the vehicle operator/owner would only need to keep one crawler assembly on hand for possible repairs, as opposed to needing to keep on hand both a right-handed and a left-handed crawler assembly.

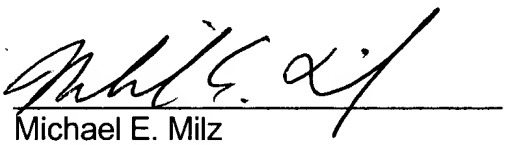
None of the above-described features or limitations are disclosed or suggested by the prior art references. For example, Porubcansky clearly discloses a crawler crane having crawler assemblies that are neither identical nor interchangeable. As best seen in FIG. 3, Porubcansky discloses a crane having a uniquely designed left-handed crawler assembly connected to the left side of the crane (the upper crawler assembly as viewed in the figure) and a uniquely designed right-handed crawler assembly connected to the right side of the crane (the lower crawler assembly as viewed in the figure). In other words, the left-handed crawler assembly is not identical to or interchangeable with the right-handed crawler assembly, and it would be impossible to mount the left-handed crawler assembly to the right side of the crane, or visa versa. This is because any attempt to mount the left-handed crawler assembly to the right side of the crane would result in the crawler drive assembly 90, which is a component of the crawler assembly, being positioned near the forward end of the crane (to the right as viewed in the figure). It should therefore be obvious that the left-handed crawler assembly will not function on the right side of the crane, or visa versa. Accordingly, Porubcansky does not disclose

or suggest a crawler vehicle or crane having identical or interchangeable crawler assemblies.

Petzold is similar to Porubcansky in that it also discloses a crawler crane having a uniquely designed left-handed crawler assembly connected to the left side of the crane, and a uniquely designed right-handed crawler assembly connected to the right side of the crane. In particular, and as best seen in FIG. 2, it should be apparent that certain components of each crawler assembly, such as the crawler drive motors 24, are uniquely designed and located for each crawler assembly. Thus, the crawler assemblies are neither identical nor interchangeable.

In view of the above, Applicant believes that the pending claims are truly distinguishable over the prior art. Accordingly, it is believed that the application is now in condition for allowance and such allowance is now earnestly requested. If for any reason the Examiner is not able to allow the application, he is requested to contact the Applicant's undersigned attorney at (312) 321-4273.

Respectfully submitted,



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